

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1885
INFO AMCONSUL LUBUMBASHI
AMCONSUL BUKAVU

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 KINSHASA 9796

FI CHANNEL

FROM CHARGE

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ASIG, CG
SUBJECT: POST MEMORANDUM; KINSHASA

REF: (A) STATE 212834; (B) STATE 215246

1. STATE OF RELATIONS AND ACCOMPLISHMENT OF POLICY
OBJECTIVES: THE MAY 1978 INVASION OF SHABA MADE IT CLEAR
THAT WE MUST GO BEYOND THE POLICY ARTICULATED IN OUR
FEBRUARY EVALUATION OF US GOALS AND OBJECTIVES IN ZAIRE
AND INSIST THAT THE MOBUTU GOVERNMENT IMPLEMENT IMPORTANT
ECONOMIC, POLITICAL, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND MILITARY REFORMS
AS A CONDITION FOR OUR CONTINUED ASSISTANCE. WE HAVE
BEEN ONLY PARTIALLY SUCCESSFUL IN WINNING THE COOPERATION
OF THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE DONOR COMMUNITY IN THIS
EFFORT; FRANCE AND BELGIUM IN PARTICULAR HAVE INTERESTS
IN ZAIRE WHICH DIVERGE SOMEWHAT FROM OURS. THE JOINT
DEMARCHE TO MOBUTU BY THE FIVE IN JUNE MADE IT CLEAR
THAT THE US INTENDED TO BE FAR MORE EXACTING THAN ZAIRE'S
OTHER PARTNERS.
FORTUNATELY, PRESIDENT MOBUTU HAS NOT RESPONDED IR-
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RATIONALLY TO OUR CONDITIONS. ALTHOUGH HE HAS COMPLAINED
OF THE USG'S "EXCESSIVE MORALIZING," HE HAS BEGUN TO
IMPLEMENT SOME NEEDED REFORMS. IN THE ECONOMIC SPHERE,
REASONABLE PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE TOWARD THE DEVELOPMENT
OF A NEW STABILIZATION PROGRAM AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A
FOREIGN EXCHANGE BUDGET, WHILE IMPROVED FINANCIAL MANAGE-
MENT IS EXPECTED TO RESULT FROM THE RECENT PLACEMENT IN

THE CENTRAL BANK OF THE FIRST MEMBERS OF THE IMF-SPONSORED TEAM OF FOREIGN EXPERTS.

IN THE POLITICAL AND MILITARY SPHERES, PROGRESS TOWARD NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS WITH ANGOLA HAS EXCEEDED OUR EXPECTATIONS, AND THERE HAVE BEEN SOME ENCOURAGING SIGNS WITH REGARD TO HUMAN RIGHTS--INCLUDING THE RELEASE FROM DETENTION OF FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER NGUZA. MOVEMENT ON THE REINTEGRATION OF SHABA INTO THE BODY POLITIC, RE-STRUCTURING OF THE ARMED FORCES, DECENTRALIZATION, AND A CRACKDOWN ON CORRUPTION, ON THE OTHER HAND, HAS BEEN SLIGHT AT BEST. THE RECORD IS THUS MIXED, MAKING IT EVIDENT THAT PRESSURE ON PRESIDENT MOBUTU WILL HAVE TO BE MAINTAINED IN VIEW OF THE VERY LONG WAY THE GOZ STILL HAS TO GO.

2. ISSUES AND PROBLEMS:

A. WE FIND OURSELVES IN THE PRECARIOUS POSITION OF ATTEMPTING TO IMPOSE INCREASINGLY STRINGENT CONDITIONS ON THE CONTINUATION OF OUR AID TO ZAIRE AT A TIME WHEN WE ARE REDUCING THE LEVEL OF THAT AID. IF OUR ASSISTANCE CONTINUES TO DECLINE, OUR ABILITY TO ACHIEVE OUR OBJECTIVES IN ZAIRE WILL DEPEND INCREASINGLY ON THE PROBLEMATIC WILLINGNESS OF THE OTHER MAJOR DONORS TO MAINTAIN THE ALMOST-UNITED FRONT ACHIEVED JUST AFTER SHABA II. OF OUR VARIOUS OBJECTIVES IN ZAIRE, THAT OF CONTRIBUTING TO GREATER NATIONAL CONFIDENTIAL

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SECURITY THROUGH STRENGTHENED ARMED FORCES APPEARS TO BE THE LEAST FEASIBLE WITH THE RESOURCES AT HAND.

B. ALTHOUGH IMPRESSIVE PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE TOWARD NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS BETWEEN ZAIRE AND ANGOLA, A SERIES OF SHABA-RELATED ISSUES STILL CONFRONT US. THESE INCLUDE SUPPORT FOR THE AFRICAN FORCE NOW ASSURING THE SECURITY OF SHABA, ASSISTANCE TO ZAIRIAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM ANGOLA AND ZAMBIA, HELP IN REOPENING OF THE BENGUELA RAILROAD, AND AID FOR ESTABLISHING A VERIFICATION COMMISSION ALONG ZAIRE'S BORDER WITH ANGOLA.

C. AS WE SEEK SIMULTANEOUSLY TO BRING PRESSURES TO BEAR IN FAVOR OF REFORM AND TO IDENTIFY US POLICY MORE WITH THE ZAIRIAN PEOPLE THAN WITH THE MOBUTU REGIME, OUR CONDUCT OF PUBLIC DIPLOMACY BECOMES MORE SENSITIVE. A CASE IN POINT WAS THE USG'S PUBLIC POSITION INSISTING UPON REFORMS WHICH WAS TAKEN IN CONNECTION WITH OUR DECISION TO GO AHEAD WITH THE PL 480 AGREEMENT. ITS THRUST RAN COUNTER TO MOBUTU'S PUBLIC PRONOUNCEMENTS THAT THE GOZ WILL NOT BOW TO PRESSURE FROM ABROAD.

D. WE HAVE ENCOUNTERED PROBLEMS IN THE PAST TWO YEARS IN ASSURING THAT PL 480 RICE IMPORTS BENEFIT PRIMARILY THE NEEDIEST ELEMENTS OF THE POPULATION. WE LACK THE MANPOWER TO INCREASE OUR INVOLVEMENT IN THE DISTRIBUTION PROCESS, WHICH IS, TECHNICALLY, A ZAIRIAN GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBILITY. IF THE GOZ THIS YEAR PROVES TO BE UNABLE TO MEET OUR DISTRIBUTION STANDARDS, WE WILL BE FACED WITH A DIFFICULT CHOICE BETWEEN ABOLISHING THE PROGRAM OR FINDING MORE CONVINCING ASSURANCE THAT AN ACCEPTABLE DISTRIBUTION PROGRAM IS POSSIBLE.

E. INFORMATION IS EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO OBTAIN IN ZAIRE. THE ABSENCE OF NORMAL STATISTICAL PUBLICATIONS, THE SECRETIVENESS OF THE ZAIRIAN GOVERNMENT REGARDING ITS CONFIDENTIAL

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ECONOMIC PLANS AND PROJECTIONS, THE ERRATIC COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM, AND INTENTIONAL INACCESSIBILITY OF SOME HIGH -LEVEL ZAIRIAN OFFICIALS MAKE ROUTINE INFORMATION GATHERING AND REPORTING UNUSUALLY DIFFICULT. THIS PROBLEM IS EXACERBATED, NOT ONLY WITHIN THE ECOM SECTION BUT THROUGHOUT THE MISSION, BY THE ABSENCE OF SUPPORT STAFF WITH ADEQUATE TRAINING IN FRENCH. TWELVE WEEKS OF FRENCH LANGUAGE TRAINING FOR ALL SECRETARIES SHOULD YIELD SUBSTANTIAL BENEFITS.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L FINAL SECTION OF 2 KINSHASA 9796

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F. THE DECLINE OF THE ZAIRIAN ECONOMY HAS MEANT THAT THE EMPHASIS WITHIN THE ECOM SECTION HAS SHIFTED FROM COMMERCIAL TO ECONOMIC WORK OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS. THE CONTINUING NEED FOR DATA ON WHICH TO BASE DECISIONS ON WHETHER TO RESCHEDULE ZAIRE'S OVERDUE DEBTS, AND THE LONG HOURS REQUIRED TO PREPARE FOR THESE RESCHEDULING AGREEMENTS AND THEN ACTUALLY OBTAIN THE PRESCRIBED PAYMENTS, HAVE REQUIRED THE SECTION TO ADJUST ITS WORK REQUIREMENTS ACCORDINGLY. ALTHOUGH THE SECTION OFFICIALLY IS STAFFED BY ONE ECONOMIC OFFICER AND THREE COMMERCIAL OFFICERS IN ADDITION TO THE ECONOMIC/COMMERCIAL COUNSELOR, ONE OF THE COMMERCIAL OFFICERS ROUTINELY SPENDS AT LEAST 75 PERCENT OF HIS TIME ON ECONOMIC ANALYSIS, LONG-RANGE ASSISTANCE PLANNING, AND OTHER NON-COMMERCIAL MATTERS. NEW FUNCTIONAL TITLES PROBABLY SHOULD BE ASSIGNED TO REFLECT MORE ACCURATELY THE OFFICERS' RESPONSIBILITIES.

G. THE EMBASSY CONTINUES TO BE ONE OF THE MOST DIFFICULT POSTS TO ADMINISTER IN THE AFRICAN BUREAU. THE POST HAS BEEN OBLIGED TO DEVELOP A FULL RANGE OF IN-HOUSE ADMINISTRATIVE CAPABILITIES TO PROVIDE ESSENTIAL SERVICES. THERE IS A SHORTAGE OF SKILLED MANPOWER IN KINSHASA. THE VERY FEW LOCAL COMPANIES ABLE AND WILLING

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TO SUPPLY TECHNICAL SERVICES ARE PROHIBITIVELY EXPENSIVE AND ARE NOT RESPONSIVE TO URGENT REQUIREMENTS. BESET WITH SERIOUS BALANCE OF PAYMENTS PROBLEMS, THE GOZ ALLOCATES INADEQUATE AMOUNTS OF FOREIGN EXCHANGE FOR THE IMPORTATION OF SUPPLIES, EQUIPMENT AND SPARE PARTS. THUS, THE EMBASSY MUST IMPORT AN UNUSUALLY HIGH PERCENTAGE OF SPARE PARTS, OFFICE MAINTENANCE SUPPLIES AND MATERIALS FROM THE US AND OTHER LOCATIONS. THE POST ENCOUNTERS PERIODIC SHORTAGES OF ESSENTIAL ITEMS DUE TO THE UNRESPONSIVENESS OF US COMPANIES AND THE INHERENT INADEQUACIES OF THE GSA.

H. ISOLATION AND SECURITY PROBLEMS UNDERMINE MORALE. THE ISLOATION STEMS FROM PROHIBITIVE AIRFARES WHICH PRECLUDE THAT AVENUE OF ESCAPE TO A DIFFERENT ENVIRONMENT, AND FROM THE IMPASSABLE ROADS AND SECURITY HAZARDS INVOLVED IN VENTURING MUCH BEYOND THE CITY LIMITS BY CAR. KINSHASA HAS A LONG HISTORY OF BURGLARIES AND VANDALISM; BURGLARIES APPEAR TO BE CYCLICAL-- WITH THE OCTOBER-DECEMBER SEASON BEING THE MOST HAZARDOUS. APPREHENSION OVER BEING ROBBED OR ACCOSTED ON THE STREET BY ROBBERS OR EVEN BY GENDARMES IS PERVERSIVE. EACH HOUSEHOLD HAS BEEN PROVIDED A RADIO FOR NOTIFYING NEIGHBORS, MOBILE LOCAL GUARD INSPECTORS, AND RSOS IN CASE OF BURGLARY ATTEMPTS. IN ADDITION, WE

HAVE A CONTINUING PROGRAM TO GRILL WINDOWS, ESTABLISH SAFE HAVENS, INSTALL BURGLAR ALARMS AND OTHERWISE IMPROVE RESIDENCE SECURITY. UNAVAILABILITY OF CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS HAS BEEN AN IMPEDIMENT OF STRENGTHENING SECURITY IN RESIDENCES.

I. THE ARTIFICIAL RATE OF CURRENCY EXCHANGE SET BY THE GOZ HAS BEEN DETRIMENTAL TO POST MORALE. REQUIRED BY US GOVERNMENT AND EMBASSY REGULATIONS TO PURCHASE LOCAL
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CURRENCY FROM THE EMBASSY CASHIER, PERSONNEL CURRENTLY OBTAIN ROUGHLY ONE-FIFTH THE AMOUNT OF ZAIRES THEY COULD RECEIVE FOR THEIR DOLLARS ON THE PARALLEL MARKET (WHICH IS USED BY MANY PROSPEROUS ZAIRIANS AND A LARGE PERCENTAGE OF EXPATRIATES IN ZAIRE). BECAUSE PRICES OF MANY GOODS AND SERVICES LIKELY TO BE PURCHASED BY EXPATRIATES ARE PEGGED TO THE PARALLEL MARKET EXCHANGE RATE, EMBASSY PERSONNEL WHO OBEY THE CURRENCY REGULATIONS MUST PAY FIVE TIMES AS MUCH FOR LOCAL ECONOMY PURCHASES AS MOST OTHER EXPATRIATES. MISSION PERSONNEL ARE PROTECTED SOMEWHAT BY ACCESS TO A COMMISSARY AND RECREATION CENTER AS WELL AS BY RULES WHICH ALLOW FOR RECONVERSION OF A LIMITED AMOUNT OF ZAIRES TO DOLLARS UPON DEPARTURE FROM THE POST. HOWEVER, THERE IS A GROWING TEMPTATION FOR EMPLOYEES TO VIOLATE THE THE REGULATIONS GOVERNING BOTH PURCHASE OF LOCAL CURRENCY AND THE SALE OF PERSONAL PROPERTY. THE MORALE OF THOSE WHO OBEY THE REGULATIONS IS ADVERSELY AFFECTED BY THE EXCHANGE RATE ITSELF AS WELL AS BY NON-COMPLIANCE BY MOST NON-OFFICIAL AMERICANS AND SUSPECTED RULE-BREAKING BY SOME EMPLOYEES. THERE IS ALSO SOME RESULTING TENDENCY FOR MISSION PERSONNEL, BEING FORCED OFF THE LOCAL ECONOMY, TO BECOME SO SELF-SUFFICIENT THAT CONTACTS WITH OTHER COMMUNITIES WILL BE ADVERSELY AFFECTED.

J. TRANSPORTATION PROBLEMS, PARTICULARLY FUEL SHORTAGES AND ABYSMAL ROADS, POSE SERIOUS PROBLEMS FOR ECOM AND POL OFFICERS TO OBTAIN FIRST-HAND INFORMATION ON EVENTS IN THOSE REGIONS OF ZAIRE NOT SERVED BY CONSULATES.

K. IT IS INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT TO JUSTIFY THE CONTINUED EXISTENCE OF THE CONSULATE AT BUKAVU UNLESS IT COMMUNICATIONS FACILITIES CAN BE UPGRADED.

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